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**Latino Rights Movement**

**Background**

Hispanics in the United States had faced discrimination for years. The mistreatment of WWII veterans pushed many Hispanics into action. Hispanics were discriminated against in schools even though the Supreme Court had declared it illegal to segregate Hispanic students. In addition migrant workers (workers that move from place to place to find work) earned very low wages and worked in unhealthy conditions. They were treated poorly and had almost no protection from their bosses.

**Question 1: What were some of the problems that Hispanics faced?**

**The Movement**

Hispanic leaders were encouraged by the success of African Americans and launched their own movement to gain rights. Cesar Chavez was one of the most important leaders of this movement. He had been working in farm fields since he was a child. In the early 1960s he began organizing other migrant farm workers to protest their conditions. He shared King’s belief in non-violence and organized the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) along with lobbyist Dolores Huerta. In September 1965 Chavez organized a strike for high wages for grape workers.

**Question 2: What did Cesar Chavez do? Whose ideas did he share?**

Later that year he started a much larger strike of grape workers and also started a national boycott of grapes. By 1968 neither of these two methods was working so in March of 1968 he went on a hunger strike (not eating until wages were increased). After he began the hunger strike the boycott on grapes picked up and almost 17 million Americans stopped buying grapes, eventually the growers came to the table and offered a better wage for the workers.

**Question 3**: **What is a hunger strike? Was it effective?**

In addition to worker’s rights there were large student protests in the 1960s. Hispanics protested to get bilingual education and more Hispanic teachers. Students staged walkouts the biggest being a walk out in Los Angeles where over 15,000 walked out until administrators would meet with them to talk about the discriminations at the schools.

**Question 4: Why were there student protests? What were they trying to accomplish?**

As a result of the movement Congress passed the 1968 Elementary and Secondary Education Act which required students to be taught in both English and their native language until they mastered English. Federal funding for bilingual education increased from $7.5 million to $135 million. The Voting Rights Act of 1975 requires areas with large immigrant populations to provide ballots in the voters’ preferred language.

**Question 5: Do you think the Hispanic rights movement accomplished its goals?**

**Women’s Rights Movement**

**Background**

During the 1950s and 1960s, increasing numbers of married women entered the labor force, but in 1963 the average working woman earned only 63 percent of what a man made. That year author Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique*, an explosive critique of middle-class patterns that helped millions of women articulate a sense of discontent. Arguing that women often had no outlets for expression other than "finding a husband and bearing children," Friedan encouraged readers to seek new roles and responsibilities, to seek their own personal and professional identities rather than have them defined by the outside, male-dominated society.

**The Movement**

The women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s drew inspiration from the civil rights movement. It was made up mainly of members of the middle class, and thus partook of the spirit of rebellion that affected large segments of middle-class youth in the 1960s. Another factor linked to the emergence of the movement was the sexual revolution of the 1960s, which in turn was sparked by the development and marketing of the birth-control pill.

Reform legislation also prompted change. During debate on the 1964 Civil Rights bill, conservatives hoped to defeat the entire measure by proposing an amendment to outlaw discrimination on the basis of gender as well as race. First the amendment, then the bill itself, passed, giving women a legal tool to secure their rights.

Women themselves took measures to improve their lot. In 1966, 28 professional women, including Betty Friedan, established the National Organization for Women (NOW) "to take action to bring American women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now." By the next year, 1,000 women had joined; four years later membership reached 15,000. NOW and similar organizations helped make women increasingly aware of their limited opportunities and strengthened their resolve to increase them.

Feminism, or organized activity on behalf of women's rights and interests, reached high tide in the early 1970s. Journalist Gloria Steinem and several other women founded a new magazine, *Ms.*, which began publication in 1972.

Some activists pressed for ratification of an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the Constitution. Passed by Congress in 1972, it declared, "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." Over the next several years, 35 of the necessary 38 states ratified it. The courts also promoted sexual equality. In 1973 the Supreme Court in *Roe v. Wade* sanctioned women's right to abortion during the early months of pregnancy -- a significant victory for the women's movement.

In the mid- to late 1970s, however, the women's movement stagnated. It failed to broaden its appeal beyond the middle class. Divisions arose between moderate and radical feminists. Conservative opponents mounted a campaign against the Equal Rights Amendment, and it died in 1982 without gaining the approval of the 38 states needed for ratification.

**Native American Rights Movement**

**Background:**

In the 1950s, Native Americans struggled with the government's policy of moving them off reservations and into cities where they might assimilate into mainstream America. Not only did they face the loss of land; many of the uprooted Indians often had difficulties adjusting to urban life. In 1961 when the policy was discontinued, the United States Commission on Civil Rights noted that for Indians, "poverty and deprivation are common."

**The movement**

In the 1960s and 1970s, watching both the development of Third World nationalism and the progress of the civil rights movement, Native Americans became more aggressive in pressing for their own rights. A new generation of leaders went to court to protect what was left of tribal lands or to recover that which had been taken, often illegally, in previous times. In state after state, they challenged treaty violations, and in 1967 won the first of many victories guaranteeing long-abused land and water rights. The American Indian Movement (AIM), founded in 1968, helped channel government funds to Indian-controlled organizations and assisted neglected Indians in the cities.

Confrontations became common. In 1969 a landing party of 78 Native Americans seized Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay and held it until federal officials removed them in 1971. In 1973 AIM took over the South Dakota village of Wounded Knee, where soldiers in the late 19th century had massacred a Sioux encampment. Militants hoped to dramatize miserable conditions in the reservation surrounding the town, where half of the families were on welfare and alcoholism was widespread. The episode ended, after one Indian was killed and another wounded, with a government agreement to re-examine treaty rights, although little was subsequently done.

Still, Indian activism brought results. Other Americans became more aware of Native American needs. Officials in all branches of government had to respond to pressure for equal treatment that was long overdue. The Senate's first Native American member, Ben Nighthorse Campbell of Colorado, was elected in 1992.